

NASHUA HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Monday, March 27, 2017 6:30 p.m. – Room 208, City Hall

Members:

Robert Sampson, Chair
Ald. David Schoneman
Ed Weber

Also present:

Carter Falk, Deputy Planning Manager/Zoning

MINUTES:

None.

OLD BUSINESS:

Expansion of the Historic District:

Mr. Sampson said that we received a letter from Bob Early from the Friends of Greeley Park, that they'd support this plan if it were separated from Berkeley Street. He asked if it were separate, would they then support the Berkeley Street piece.

Mr. Weber said that what's important is that we need to get at least Greeley Park into the fold. He said that if we can get Greeley Park this year, that's the bottom line, we at least need to get that.

Mr. Sampson said he has no problem getting Greeley Park, but is equally concerned about Berkeley Street, because of the duck pond house, which has been a little bit shaky.

Mr. Falk said that there was a proposal to put in a sober house at the duck pond house, but after they were told they'd need both Zoning Board and Planning Board approval, they changed their mind.

Mr. Weber asked if we could do a part 1 and part 2.

Mr. Sampson said that we certainly can, but said he'd like to know if the Friends of Greeley Park support Berkeley Street.

Mr. Falk said that Mr. Early lives on Swart Terrace.

Mr. Sampson said that a majority of the residents from Swart Terrace who came to last summer's Ward meeting didn't like the idea of being in the district.

Mr. Sampson asked if it would be appropriate if either himself, or Mr. Falk, to give him a call and ask him what their view is.

Ald. Schoneman said it would, but they wouldn't have any view as an organization, because they're just the Friends of Greeley Park, but of course, everyone involved in that lives somewhere, and there may be some who are in favor of it and some who aren't. He said it sounds like the entity may be fully in favor, and maybe they really wouldn't even weigh in as an entity on Berkeley, because they're not the Friends of Berkeley Street. He mentioned that the general responses for Berkeley Street were positive.

Mr. Falk said that unfortunately, there were only a small percentage of the homeowners on Berkeley who've responded, it would be nice to hear from all of them.

Ald. Schoneman said it would be great to be adding something to Berkeley Street, but it would be nice to get Greeley Park in there. He said he doesn't like the idea that they could say yes to Greeley Park and scuttle Berkeley Street, we don't want to see that. He said maybe just doing Greeley might not be a bad idea.

Mr. Falk said that Greeley Park could go separately from Berkeley Street, as they're two separate pieces of property.

Mr. Sampson said that they have different qualities, especially since there's no housing in Greeley Park.

Mr. Weber said that we might get both of them.

Mr. Sampson said that suppose we ask for a resolution for Greeley Park and Berkeley Street, two separate items, the Aldermen could weigh in separately, but we're asking for both of them to see what happens.

Mr. Weber said definitely, we definitely want to ask for them.

Ald. Schoneman said that we could do two simultaneous resolutions.

Mr. Falk said that he imagines that the Board of Aldermen could vote on them both separately.

Mr. Sampson said that right now, Greeley Park already has two kinds of protections, they have the BPW Park Commissioners and the Board of Aldermen, but Berkeley Street doesn't have anyone standing up for them, so that's a concern.

Ald. Schoneman said it's a concern to him also, and doesn't want to see the kind of development that could potentially happen, it would change it forever.

Mr. Sampson said that you can't go back.

Mr. Weber said that is what needs to be said at the Aldermanic meeting.

Mr. Sampson asked Ald. Schoneman if he has any sense of where the Aldermen are. He said he knows that the Mayor likes the idea, and he's supportive.

Ald. Schoneman said that he thinks that most of the Aldermen aren't going to have an opinion, since it's not in their Ward. He said that they would listen to the Ward 3 Alderman, hopefully, and there are several of them that live in the Ward. He said that he thinks that the Board would

go along with what the public would say, if there is a crowd of people showing up who say that they don't want it, they'll probably say that they won't do that, because they don't have any stake in it, they'd go with the public.

Mr. Weber asked if in Nashua, if we have buildings that are right next to a historical buildings that aren't protected, like bad examples.

Mr. Sampson said that there are probably several sites like that in Nashua, such as a house on South Main Street where the CVS is. He said that there were a lot of old stately mansions there in that area, and now it's only the Chandler library building.

Mr. Weber said that what he's looking for now, is that the people that own their houses now on Berkeley Street have nice houses, and if we can show what can happen visually, and put that up at the Alderman meeting, such as a slide show, but we don't want to offend anyone by showing their house. He said it would be great to show what can happen, a nice historical house and a sore thumb right in the middle, and this is what can happen if the street isn't protected.

Mr. Sampson suggested that everyone look, and think about places in other cities, and see if we can come up with some examples.

Mr. Weber said he can go and take the pictures.

Mr. Sampson said that would be good.

Mr. Falk said that if the Commission is going to bring Greeley Park and Berkeley Street forward to the Board of Aldermen, he asked if there should be another Ward meeting like we had last summer, and just invite the people who live on Berkeley Street, since they'd be in the district, and see what kind of response we get.

Mr. Sampson asked if we are including Berkeley Street, if it would include Swart Terrace.

Ald. Schoneman said to keep a nice contiguous area, so, it wouldn't be the oval down there, it would be the homes at the intersection of Swart and Berkeley.

Mr. Falk said it would be the four houses at the intersection.

Ald. Schoneman asked if it would be both sides of Berkeley Street.

Mr. Sampson said yes, it would be those four corners.

Mr. Falk said that it would also include the northern two houses past the intersection of Berkeley and Swart going north, they're the two northernmost homes on Berkeley Street, it would be those two as well.

Mr. Sampson said we should start at Laton Street and go north.

Mr. Weber asked if this will be an e-mail, or a written letter.

Mr. Sampson said that the question is if we are going to have another Ward meeting for the Berkeley Street.

Mr. Falk said he thought it would be valuable to have another meeting for the folks on Berkeley Street, to tell them that we are strongly considering having the street going into the historic district, and that the Commission would like to move forward to the Board of Aldermen. It would be nice to see how many of them would be supportive.

Mr. Weber asked if there are any churches in the area, in the Historic District.

Mr. Sampson said the Unitarian Universalist Church, and the First Church.

Mr. Falk said that there's a church on Concord Street near the Red Cross.

Mr. Weber said that there is a block grant put out by the Nashua Regional Planning Council.

Mr. Sampson said that the UU Church and the First Church are in the District.

Mr. Weber said that this is money to upkeep their churches. He said he didn't know if all the money has been given out yet.

Mr. Sampson asked if we should get a formal vote of the Commission, or at least a telephone or e-mail survey that everyone agrees that the thing to do is: a) try to have a meeting with the Berkeley Street residents, and b) assuming a positive response, propose to the Board of Aldermen two resolutions, one to cover Berkeley Street and one to cover Greeley Park.

Ald. Schoneman said that is good, we can even get the resolutions drafted, and get that process going, we just won't have them presented. He said he didn't think we'd get any resistance on Greeley Park, we can present that any time for First Reading, at least get it drafted, in fact we can ask them to draft it, and say to hang on to it until we tell them to get it on the agenda.

Mr. Sampson said that this would be asking Corporation Counsel. He said that the survey that we're talking about, if we could do that with another letter, or would this be a formal meeting, meaning getting together in a room somewhere.

Mr. Falk said that staff can send out another letter to the homeowners on Berkeley Street, we should have another meeting like we had last summer at the Elementary School.

Ald. Schoneman said that they typically have the Ward meetings at the Elementary School, and sometimes changing venues gets people confused.

Mr. Weber said that one of the things that he'd recommend on that letter is a picture of what can happen to them, that's the reason that we're doing this.

Ald. Schoneman said that maybe asking for a response on that letter, too. He said that if only the folks who don't want it show up, that makes it difficult.

Mr. Weber said if we give them a real reason, so that they'll realize it can happen to them.

Mr. Sampson said let's see if we can find some examples. He said most every town in the area has a historic district.

Mr. Weber said that he could call, there's a historical group of people up in Concord, and said he went to their workshop two days ago, for Planning Boards and Commissions, to have workshops, and they had some real quality.

Mr. Sampson said it would be real helpful if he could give them a call.

At this point, Ald. Schoneman had to leave to go to Board of Alderman meeting.

Mr. Sampson said for a final suggestion, we should send out an e-mail to all the members of the Commission, saying we talked about this, and didn't have a formal meeting, but if they agree, this is the direction we are going in, just to make sure we don't have anybody on the Commission that says wait a minute, I never heard about that.

Ald. Schoneman said that he can pursue legislation, but won't do it until he hears back from the Commission.

Mr. Falk said that he can send out an e-mail, summarizing the direction of tonight's meeting to everybody.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

CF/cf